



# The Heron

*Newsletter of Clinton County Conservation*  
**Volume 45 Number 1 January - April, 2023**

## LANDSLIDE *(Fleetwood Mac)*

*by Mark Roberts, Interpretive Naturalist (retired)*

34 years as a county naturalist are coming to an end for me. All but three of those were spent in the service of the citizens of Clinton County. When I came to Clinton County I followed in the footsteps of legends in Iowa Environmental Education. Indeed four of the founding members of the Iowa Association of Naturalists preceded me here in Clinton County. Bob Bryant, the first Director and acting naturalist for Clinton County, E. Lee Lee, Larry Dolphin and Sharon Kaufman followed in order, all among the founders of the County Conservation Education movement in Iowa. If we had a Hall of Fame for Iowa Naturalists, they all would be enshrined.



*From left: Mark Roberts, 1992-2023, E. Lee Lee, 1977-81, Larry Dolphin, 1981-84 and Sharon Kaufman, 1985-88. Picture Taken Fall, 1998.*

Over the last three decades a lot has changed. We have more naturalists, more nature centers, more awards and more pontoon boats! One thing hasn't changed, children. The elementary students of Clinton County have always been the inspiration for the Conservation Education Program. Giving kids their first glimpses into nature has been the greatest privilege of my career. I will admit, I have my favorites. The students at the kindergarten, first and second grade levels are sooooo excited for their first chance to hold a snake, pet a salamander, see a dead fish or catch a cricket frog. Their excitement is contagious not only to the others in their class but to me as well.

I learned on my first day, dirt washes and water dries. Don't let either hold you back from diving right in with the kids. Nothing is more fun for me or the children than getting in the mud and water to see what nature has hiding. I feel like the word inspiring is a bit too highfalutin' for what I do. I do know that if you show that you will wade, crawl



*Peregrine Falcon Education, Welton Elementary School, Spring 2001*

or climb along with the kids, they see there is little to fear and a whole lot of fun to be had. In the end I am just a big kid myself and that has served me well over the years. The kids have inspired me to keep that young sense of wonder of nature throughout the years.

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***“Oh, mirror in the sky, what is love?  
 Can the child within my heart rise above?  
 Can I sail through the changing ocean tides?  
 Can I handle the seasons of my life?”***

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I have had some great experiences during my career and have worked with some outstanding people, across the state of Iowa, through the Iowa Association of Naturalists (IAN). I have attended workshops in every corner of the state, exploring all the neat little nooks and crannies that Iowa hides it's natural beauty in. The Loess Hills in the west, the Driftless Area of the northeast, the rolling hills in the south, the marshes of central Iowa and the mighty Mississippi River in every county on the eastern edge. Iowa is a beautiful state but we keep our gems hidden. You have to go and look!

My first caving experience was at Werden's Cave in 1986. I was an intern with Hartman Reserve Nature Center in Black Hawk County. The county hosted a trip to Eden Valley and Werden's Cave. We started off in the Eden Valley Nature Center with Naturalist, Sharon Kaufman.



We hiked out to the swinging bridge, up to the tower then off to the cave. Sharon popped out of a hole near the ceiling and jumped to the floor. I thought; "that woman is cool!" Little did I know that I would spend more than 30 year's leading people on a similar experiences at Eden Valley. And, no, I never did fit in that hole near the ceiling of the cave but I hoisted a few hundred kids through it!



*My son, Sam Roberts, Werden's Cave, Spring 2002 on his 5th grade field trip.*

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***"Well, I've been afraid of changing  
'Cause I've built my life around you  
But time makes you bolder  
Even children get older  
And I'm getting older too..."***

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I have also been lucky enough to go both to California and Alaska as part of my job! In 1998 I attended the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) Conference in Anchorage, Alaska. While in Alaska I saw much in the Kenai Peninsula and the Chugach Mountains. In 2007 I was fortunate to be selected to receive a grant through *Lyondellbasell* to take part in an *Earthwatch* Project with the *Pelagic Shark Research Foundation* in Monterey Bay's Elkhorn Slough to help with a study of the sharks and rays of that live there. Seeing nature education through the eyes of other professionals was critical to bringing the best ideas home to our county.



*Guitarfish, tagged and ready for release. Sharks & Rays of Monterey, California, Summer 2007.*



***Do NOT feed the gulls!!! Fall 2011 (it all started with a kid and an innocent bag of Doritos!).***

My career has spanned the reintroduction and/or recovery of entire species here in Iowa including the four in the corners of this newsletter: the trumpeter swan, bald eagle, peregrine falcon and sandhill crane! I have also seen the arrival of the American white pelican, house finch, Eurasian tree sparrow, collared dove and the emerald ash borer!

Former Clinton County Conservation Board Member, Alan Green, recently told me. "Mark, your legacy is not about a pontoon boat, a nature center, awards or a program. It is in the children. Children you inspired to appreciate nature and to take the earth's health into account as they live their lives." He was right. I have had many parents come up to me after field trips and they talk about the experience they had with me in a canoe, underground or waist deep in a marsh. They have fond memories and let me know that I made a lasting impression with them. It also reminds how long I have been here since they are coming to my field trips with their own children now. I think I'd better go before they start bringing the grandkids!

I have to thank my wife of 36 years, Karma, for standing by me. It is hard being married to a naturalist, I think. I missed many family events because I worked hundreds of evenings and weekends. She had the 9-5 job and it fell to her to get the kids to practices and performances. We put each other through college and we have been partners through life's trials. I could not have made it without her.

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***"And if you see my reflection  
in the snow-covered hills  
Well the landslide will bring it down, oh oh  
The landslide will bring it down..."***

---

Ok, enough of the mushy stuff! I am leaving the future Clinton County Conservation to others. They will sink or swim largely dependent on how hard they kick. I will tell the stories of this place for the rest of my life and I mostly will smile in the telling.

I leave you with the words of a most excellent and admirable hobbit, Bilbo Baggins:

*"I, uh I have things to do.  
(whispering to himself "I've put this off far too long.")  
I regret to announce that this is the end. I am going now.  
I bid you all a very fond farewell. Goodbye".*







# LET NATURE BE NATURE

by Jill Schmidt, Environmental Education Coordinator

As human beings we often feel the need to control nature. We see something that we feel is “wrong” and immediately draw attention to it, “how can it be fixed?” “what can we do to make it better?” More times than not, there is nothing wrong at all. Mother Nature has a way of rounding-out all her corners, filling in all the cracks, all in her own time. Don’t get me wrong, there are multiple instances where human intervention saved a species or cleaned up a river, but many times we are more the problem than the savior. Why do we feel entitled to control something that isn’t meant to be controlled? As a naturalist working and living my career in nature I often try to remind people to just let nature BE nature!

Just like many things in life, human involvement in nature’s ways is not very clear. There are many situations that over time depend on our help, but the key is being able to decide *when* is the right time. There are many instances that we, as naturalists, see all too often. The number one example of humans intervening in nature is “rescuing” baby animals. Without the clear understanding of such animal’s behavioral ecology, why on Earth would you try to “save” it if you don’t know if it needs saving? When a baby animal is found by a human, often in the spring, the human’s instinct to “save it” immediately steps in. We get hundreds of calls asking us what they should do with baby rabbits, birds and turtles that are often in abundance in late spring or early summer. LEAVE THEM ALONE! Many wildlife species present very little parental care, including turtles. Birds and rabbits enter this world completely altricial (hatched or born in an underdeveloped state and requiring care and feeding by the parents) and depend solely on their parents to care for them but this does not happen 24-hours a day. There will be a time where the young are left alone, and more times than not, that is OK. My best advice to someone who is debating on picking up that baby rabbit or moving that fawn and calling the Conservation Office, is to stop, think and evaluate the situation. Do some research on the animal, allow time to pass and revisit the situation at a later time. It is OK if not every baby animal survives to adulthood, in fact that is how natural selection works. It may seem cruel but the strong are meant to survive and pass along their genes, not the weak.



*A nest of tiny bunnies.*

## We are not owners of Iowa’s wildlife.

As the dominant species we often feel entitled to do whatever we want with nature. Another way humans over step their boundaries when it comes to nature is taking animals from the wild to become pets. Historically I would have mentioned raccoons but today, if I had to pick the top over-collected animal it would be turtles. Turtles are so cute as babies. They’re easy to handle, easy to store as a pet, especially when young, and easy to feed, but **THEY DO NOT MAKE GOOD PETS!** Several years ago I was leading a field trip at Lake Malone when I was tipped off by a student that another student had a pocket full of baby turtles. My first reaction was this has to be a joke, but once I approached the student, I soon found that in fact, he had multiple baby painted turtles in the pockets of his shorts. ***What a teachable moment this was!***

Turtles face many hardships caused by humans throughout their lives. Road mortality, pesticides, water quality changes, recreational impacts, and loss of habitat all make that list, but over-collection for the turtle trade is number one. We are asked several times a year if we would want to “adopt” a turtle from a private home because they no longer want to care for it. Turtles have long lifespans and require specific environmental conditions, i.e. humidity



*A handful of painted turtle hatchlings.*

levels, good water quality, controlled temperatures, they are stinky and take a lot of care. **PLEASE LET THE TURTLES BE!** Animals are not the only thing that people encroach upon in nature. Healthy nature is messy. It is not a perfectly manicured lawn with occasional non-native flowers planted here and there. It is not without dead trees and native grasses. I feel the general population lacks the understanding of healthy nature and its importance. We as a society lack diversity in our nature, especially in our agricultural state. If we took a step back and realized that plant diversity is the key to a healthy planet we would all benefit from it. We are taught to color within the lines as children but if we loosened our grip on fine lines and opened our minds to messy nature our environment would thrive. I challenge you to take a different approach to your land, include the native plants, reduce your acres of mowing by including sustainable pollinator plants or more trees. Bring that natural environment closer to you.

We will always be the top of the food chain on our planet but we do not need to always act on it. Let nature be nature and open your mind to other possibilities, we as guests of Mother Nature will ultimately benefit from it.





# WINTER IS NOT A SEASON, IT'S A CELEBRATION!

**Cross Country Skiing and Snowshoeing** ~ As weather conditions allow we will schedule some events, including beginners clinics, at various locations throughout the county. Write [jschmidt@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:jschmidt@clintoncounty-ia.gov) and place yourself on our "Adventurers" list. You will receive a short message whenever pop-up snow events are planned.

**Mississippi River Eco Tourism Center & Camp Store**  
**Winter Hours ~ 8 AM to 4 PM Wednesday - Sunday.**

**Winter Rates ~ Effective thru March 31<sup>st</sup> ~ Eden Valley Camping ~ \$12, any site ~ Rock Creek Camping ~ \$10 primitive or \$15 electric site ~ Community Hall, Rock Creek ~ \$250 per day ~ Pintail Cabin, Rock Creek ~ \$100 per night ~ Cabin at Camp Miss-Elk-Ton ~ \$100 per night**

## JANUARY EVENTS

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ New Years Day ~ Eco Tourism Center Closed**

**1<sup>st</sup> ~ April 30<sup>th</sup> ~ Project Feederwatch** ~ Visit <https://feederwatch.org> for information. There is a small fee to participate.

**6<sup>th</sup> ~ Snouts and Sniffers ~ 10:30 AM ~ Discovery Center** ~ What do you call somebody with no body and no nose? Nobody knows! Today is all about the nose. The book, the live snake, turtle and craft! Everything! If you miss it on Friday, activities without live animals will be available on Saturday too!

**10<sup>th</sup> ~ The Sharks & Rays of Monterey ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Re-live the Shark & Ray Research Mark Roberts participated in back in 2007 in Monterey Bay, California. We will have refreshments during this presentation in the Community Hall in the Eco Tourism Center.



**21<sup>st</sup> ~ Eagle Watch ~ 9 AM-2 PM ~ Clinton Community College** ~ Stop by our booth and say "Hi" to the critters and our naturalists and take part in all the great sessions.

**23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ A once a month meeting with volunteers that help with events. We would love to meet you!

**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Animal Signs Hike ~ 1 PM ~ Eden Valley ~ We** will investigate the timber looking for animal signs such as tracks, homes and scat! We will meet at the Nature Center and make our way through the trails, be sure to wear comfortable and warm shoes!



This is a free program, but registration is required. Please call or text Jill @ 563-349-8680 to get on the list. All children need to be accompanied by an adult.

## FEBRUARY EVENTS

**Hidden in Plain Sight ~ Thru the second week of April ~** This is an interactive hiking/hide and seek game played using shed deer antlers. Rules and clues will be posted on our Facebook page and a prize will be awarded weekly.

**Rule and guidelines.**

1. Shed antlers will be placed and clues posted on Facebook every Monday by 1 PM unless posted otherwise.

2. If not found by Friday of the week, another clue will posted in the Facebook original post.

3. Shed antler must be returned to receive that week's prize.

4. Special rules may apply from week to week. Please respect the rules so the game can continue.

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Floppers and Loppers ~ 10:30 AM ~ Discovery Center**

~ Oh my, what big ears you have! Not only will there be example of big ears, there will be all types of animal ears represented! We will even bring in some minnows as the floppers for your child to squeal with delight as it flops in their hand. If you miss it on Friday, activities without live animals will be available on Saturday too!



**11<sup>th</sup> ~ Clinton Chapter Banquet Whitetails Unlimited Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Vista Grande, Clinton** ~ For tickets call Jeff Beckwith at 563-249-7358.

**12<sup>th</sup> ~ Nature's Sweethearts ~ 1:30 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ With

Valentine's Day around the corner, come learn about what love looks like for local wildlife. We will be reading a story and doing a craft. This is a free program, but registration is required. Please register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com) or call 563-847-7202. All children need to be accompanied by an adult.



**16<sup>th</sup> ~ Starlab ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ The portable planetarium is memorable for all ages! Experience the "night sky" in the warmth of the indoors, figure out some tips and listen to some mythology! Registration is not required but recommended by calling or texting 563-212-0955.

**23<sup>rd</sup> ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ A once a month meeting with volunteers that help with events. We would love to meet you!







**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Winter Fun Day ~ 9 AM-12 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ We will be loaning our equipment and expertise for you and your family to ice fish, cross country ski, snowshoe and possibly ice skate! There will also be warming fires and inside activities like crafts and live animals to continue the family fun, no matter the weather! If there is not good snow/ice conditions we will have other fun outdoor activities planned.

**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Barred Owl Tree Carving Dedication ~ 12:15 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Our very own barred owl will be present to dedicate Rock Creek's new barred owl sentinel created from a burr oak that had lived out its first life, carved by Gary Keenan, made possible by the memorial of past board member Kim Rixen-Bratthauer.



**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Freezin' for a Reason ~ Polar Plunge ~ 1 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Being outside and experiencing nature is a vital component for a healthy life! The Clinton County Conservation Foundation is a non-profit that supports environmental education for the people in our area! They provide bus scholarships to schools for field trips, help fund the Blue Heron Eco Cruise, enhance our nature centers and much more! Help us support this organization and keep nature in the lives of our children and neighbors by raising money and taking the plunge! Pledge to raise \$100 to be donated to the Foundation. Registration opens January 27<sup>th</sup> call or text Jill @ 563-349-8680 to sign up! Check us out on Facebook for more details!

## MARCH EVENTS

**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Paws and Claws ~ 10:30 AM ~ Discovery Center** ~ Did you know tree frogs secrete a sticky material from their feet to climb glass easily?! It will be all about the feet today with a book, live animals (hawk, salamander and frog) and craft! If you miss it on Friday, activities without live animals will be available on Saturday too!



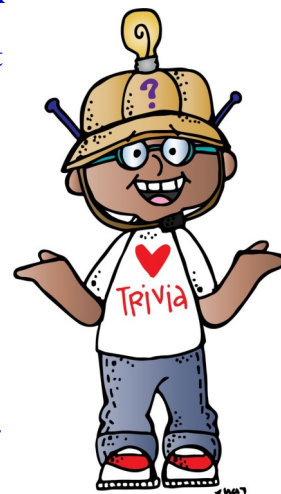
**3<sup>rd</sup> ~ Clinton County Ducks Unlimited ~ 6 PM ~ Buzzy's ~ Welton** ~ Contact Brian Huling at 563-357-8830.

**4<sup>th</sup> ~ Winter Open House ~ 10 AM-1 PM ~ Eden Valley Nature Center** ~ Come celebrate the outdoors at the Eden Valley Nature Center! There will be skiing and snow shoeing, weather permitting. Enjoy hot chocolate and cookies at the center after you explore the the park.



**17<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> ~ The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Backyard Bird Count** ~ It's free and easy. Visit [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org) for info.

**18<sup>th</sup> ~ Trivia Night ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ Doors open at 6 PM, trivia starts at 7 PM. Come for a fun night of trivia to raise funds for the Friends of Rock Creek and Fishing Has No Boundaries organizations. FORC are the eyes and ears of the visitors while promoting the park through volunteering and hosting events. FHNB now hosts two fishing events at the county parks for disabled youth and adults that might not otherwise have the opportunity to fish. Register your table of 8 for \$80 or \$15 for individuals, just call or text 563-212-0955 to reserve your spot.



**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Clinton County Pheasants Forever Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Millennium Ballroom, Goose Lake** ~ Contact Brad Taylor at 563-221-1214.

**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Cedar-Wapsi Chapter of Pheasants Forever Banquet ~ 5 PM ~ Cedar County Fairgrounds, Tipton** ~ Contact Chip Brown at 563-357-5624.

**28<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ A once a month meeting with volunteers that help with events. We would love to meet you!

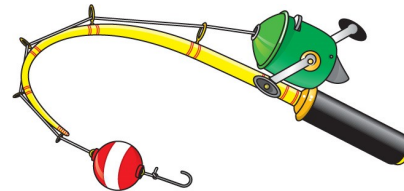
**29<sup>th</sup> ~ Woodcock "Sky Dance" ~ 7:30 PM ~ Sherman Park, north entrance** ~ We will look and listen for the courtship display and try to get up close! Wear long pants in case we have to go through brambles.

## APRIL EVENTS

**2<sup>nd</sup> ~ Complete Rod Building Workshop ~ 9 AM ~ Rock Creek** ~

Custom Rod Builders, Garry Land & Ryan Waltz

will be on hand to help you complete your very own 6'6" custom spinning rod for only \$75, just register on [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com). You will be reaming out the cork handle to threading on the guides. This project will take a few hours depending on skill level but rods must stay overnight, to be picked up at a future time for the epoxy to harden on the spinners. The camp store will be open to purchase food and drink during the day or bring your own.



**15<sup>th</sup> ~ Spring Fling ~ 10 AM ~ Eco Center, Rock Creek** ~ Spend the day celebrating spring! At **10 AM** there will be a FREE egg hunt for ages 1-12 in and around the Eco Center. Join Naturalist Jill Schmidt for "Bird Beaks" a wildlife program at **10:30 AM**. You will get a chance to investigate all of the unique beak features that allow birds to find their favorite food! We will also be making bird feeders to take home! The Blue Heron will be making its 2023 maiden voyage! Be one of the first passengers for the 2023 public cruise season! Cruises will leave at **12:30** and **2 PM**, limited space is available, registration is required. Contact Jill Schmidt at 563-847-7202 to sign up!

**25<sup>th</sup> ~ Friends of Rock Creek Meeting ~ 6 PM ~ Rock Creek** ~ A once a month meeting with volunteers that help with events. We would love to meet you!





## MEET THE NEW NATURALIST

by Kari Jeffrey, Interpretive Naturalist

Hello everyone! My name is Kari Jeffrey and I am so excited for the opportunity to be an interpretive naturalist in Clinton County. I grew up in Marble Rock, Iowa and found my passion by exploring the grove behind my father's house. My siblings and I were frog-catchers, rock-finders and creek-stompers. My dad is a farmer and instilled in me the value of the land and the animals that live there. He taught me about some of the wildlife we encountered while doing chores and checking fields. I was fascinated by these critters and always wanted to learn more. My mom is a teacher who knows the importance of early education. She made learning fun and something I really enjoyed. With the tools given to me by my parents, I knew I wanted to combine my interests and be a nature teacher of some kind. I was unsure of how to make this a career path, but I remembered the fun lady in my home county who would come to my classroom to talk about birds, bugs and a ton of other cool things. She also seemed to always hang out at the nature center I liked to visit. Turns out, she was a naturalist named Heidi Reams, and I knew that's what I wanted to be, too! After graduating high school, I attended Iowa State University and earned an Animal Ecology degree, focused on the Interpretation of Natural Resources.

I've gained experience teaching people of all ages about wildlife through my internships. I spent the summer of 2019 with Mitchell County Conservation as the seasonal

naturalist, where I learned valuable plant identification skills and was able to raise monarchs to tag and release. In the summer of 2021, I was at Story County Conservation where I focused on programming and planning summer camps. Most recently, I spent 6 months at the Blank Park Zoo in Des Moines as a seasonal educator. In this position, I was able to travel the state and teach many community members about wildlife. I also gained experience with ambassador animals and safe ways to handle them.

The best part about being in this field is constantly learning new information about nature. I am so grateful to have the wonderful naturalists here in Clinton County to help me grow and learn as I start this journey. I look forward to getting to know the people of Clinton County and exploring the beautiful areas this county has to offer.



**Kari Jeffrey holding a leopard frog caught in Story County.**

## TIGER SALAMANDERS

by Kari Jeffrey, Interpretive Naturalist

One of the toughest questions I get asked is what my favorite animal is and that's because I usually want to answer all of them! However, if I was being honest with myself, there is a creature that has a special, slimy place in my heart: tiger salamanders. Each place I've worked at has had a tiger salamander to care for. Aside from being super cute (in my opinion), these animals have fascinating adaptations and are important in the ecosystem.

Tiger salamanders are among the largest terrestrial salamanders found in wetlands across North America. They usually grow to be 7-8.5 inches, but some are over 13 inches long! They camouflage nicely on wetland banks and forest floors thanks to their yellow splotches or stripes covering dark olive or brown skin.

Worms, insects, and snails top the list of favorite meals for most tiger salamanders. Don't let their goofy smiles fool you, these guys can be fierce predators. Tiger salamanders tend to be a great snack for other animals such as raptors, snakes, raccoons, and skunks.

Salamanders are known as "environmental indicators", which means that they are among the first animals in a system to be affected by environmental changes. This is because of their thin skin which can absorb moisture and chemicals. Having this thin skin restricts tiger salaman-

ders from venturing far from a water source, where they also mate and lay eggs. In late winter or early spring, tiger salamanders mate and the females attach their egg masses to rocks and sticks in the pond bed. In about 15-50 days, larvae hatch and feed on insect larvae in the water. After about 2-5 months, the larvae mature into adults and can come out of the water. In the wild, tiger salamanders can live to be up to 16 years old!

Even though it seems like tiger salamanders are rare, their populations are stable. These animals spend most of the day underground in burrows and come out at night to hunt. This time of year, we won't see tiger salamanders because they are hibernating beneath the frost line, covered with dirt and leaf litter. Come spring, hopefully, we'll be lucky enough to spot one of these amazing critters in the wild.



**Tiger salamanders are so cool!**

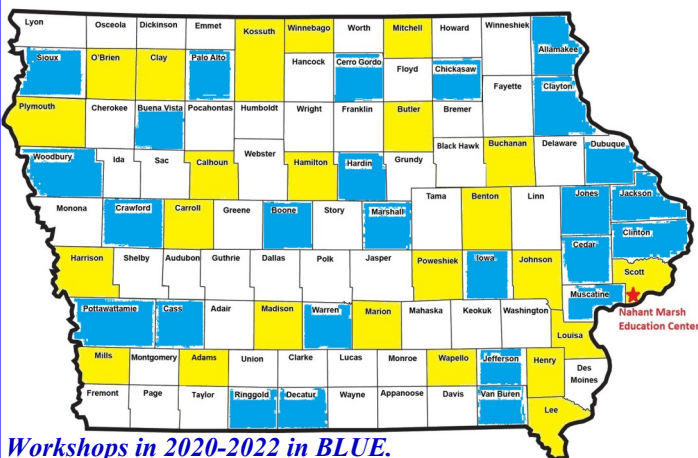


# BUILDING BETTER BIRDERS & CITIZEN SCIENTISTS WORKSHOPS 2

by Kelly J. McKay, Mark A. Roberts, Brian P. Ritter, & James M. Wiebler

Between September 2020 and February 2022, we conducted 100 “Building Better Birders and Citizen Scientists Workshops” across 26 counties in Iowa as part of a Resource Enhancement and Protection – Conservation Education Program (REAP-CEP) grant that we received from the state of Iowa. Although funded by REAP-CEP, this project was a collaborative partnership involving the Iowa DNR, BioEco Research and Monitoring Center, Clinton County Conservation, Nahant Marsh Education Center, Blevins Wild Bird Shop and Art Gallery and the Clinton County Chapter of Pheasants Forever.

During this project, conducted in the middle of the raging COVID-19 pandemic, we had two primary attendance goals: 1) to interact with 900 total participants among the 100 workshops, and 2) to interact with 2,700 cumulative participants throughout these 100 workshops (for an average of 3 presentations a person attended during a workshop). The REAP-CEP Committee thought these were unrealistically high goals, especially amidst the pandemic. Nevertheless, when we completed our 100 workshops we had smashed both goals. These workshops had serviced 1,806 total and 3,098 cumulative participants! Additionally, all avian data collected during the course of these workshops were included in seasonal reports submitted to the Iowa Ornithologists’ Union. Consequently, these workshops also produced 1,056 citizen scientists! The success of this program was acknowledged as we were awarded the 2021 Iowa Ding Darling Environmental Education Award from the Iowa Association of Naturalists and the Iowa Conservation Education Coalition.



Workshops in 2020-2022 in BLUE.  
Workshops in 2022-2024 in YELLOW.

During the initial workshops, there were far more counties interested than we could possibly serve. Therefore, we submitted another REAP-CEP grant request this year to provide workshop opportunities to additional counties and possibly even non-county affiliated nature centers. On June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022 the REAP-CEP Committee, in a 5-0 vote, approved us for another grant! As a result, we will be conducting the “Building Better Birders and Citizen Scientists Workshops 2” across 25 new counties or nature centers in Iowa from the fall of 2022 through the spring of 2024.

Each county or nature center will host a series of 3 dif-



ferent workshops (i.e., 75 total workshops) which will be free to the public. As with the initial program, host organizations will be able to build their own specific workshops choosing from several programming options including: various bird identification PowerPoint presentations based on species groups or habitat guilds, a variety of “public-friendly” avian research presentations, daytime bird hikes of varying lengths, nocturnal “owl prowls,” plus any other type of presentation or program conducted by the host organization.

All the collaborative partners from the initial workshops will be involved with this new series of workshops. Additionally, 2 new partners have joined in this collaborative effort: Cedar-Wapsi Chapter of Pheasants Forever and the Clinton County Conservation Foundation. We have also created a “Building Better Birders” Website, so that anyone will be able to find out when and where workshops will be held, as well as what each workshop will consist of in terms of programming.

## Upcoming Building Better Birders & Citizen Scientists Workshops in Eastern Iowa.

Visit <https://buildingbetterbirders.com> for details.

Butler County Workshop  
Benton County Workshop  
Johnson County Workshop  
Scott County Workshop  
Louisa County Workshop  
Butler County Workshop #2  
Lee County Workshop  
Wapello County Workshop  
Henry County Workshop  
Poweshiek County Workshop

Sunday, January 15  
Friday, January 20  
Saturday, February 4  
Friday, February 17  
Saturday, March 4  
Thursday, March 16  
Saturday, March 25  
Saturday, April 1  
Saturday, April 22  
Sunday, April 23





**Clinton County Conservation**  
**P.O. Box 68**  
**2308 255<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Grand Mound, Iowa 52751**  
**Phone: 563-847-7202**  
**Email: [conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov](mailto:conservation@clintoncounty-ia.gov)**  
**Web: [www.mycountyparks.com](http://www.mycountyparks.com)**

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 Permit No. 164



**Mark & Son, Ben Roberts (left-center) at the 2007 Clinton County Pheasants Forever Youth Hunt at Beckridge Hunting Preserve.**

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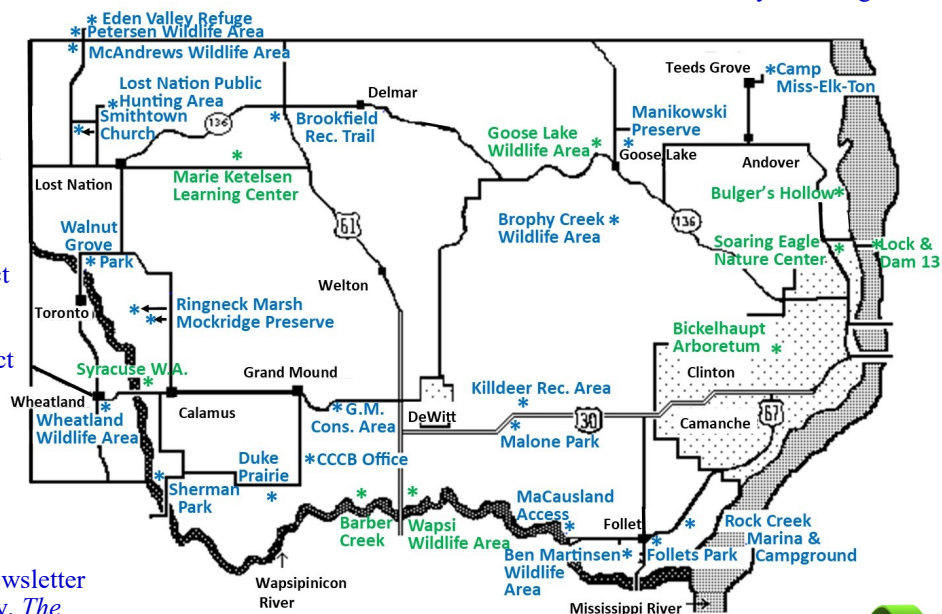
*Mark Roberts, Winter Newsletter Editor*

#### MAILING LIST

Clinton County residents may receive this newsletter at home, free. Others are charged \$5 annually. *The Heron* is on our website or emailed, free of charge.

#### BOARD MEETINGS

The Clinton County Conservation Board meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome. The Board regularly meets the third Tuesday the month, at 6 PM, in the Conservation Office, located 1 mile south of Grand Mound at 2308 255th St. Please note, date and location may be changed.



The Clinton County Conservation Board in the provision of services and facilities to the public does not discriminate against anyone on the basis of race, color, sex, creed, national origin, age or handicap. If anyone believes he or she has been subject to such discrimination, he or she may file a complaint alleging discrimination with either the Clinton C.C.B. or the Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Dept. of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.



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